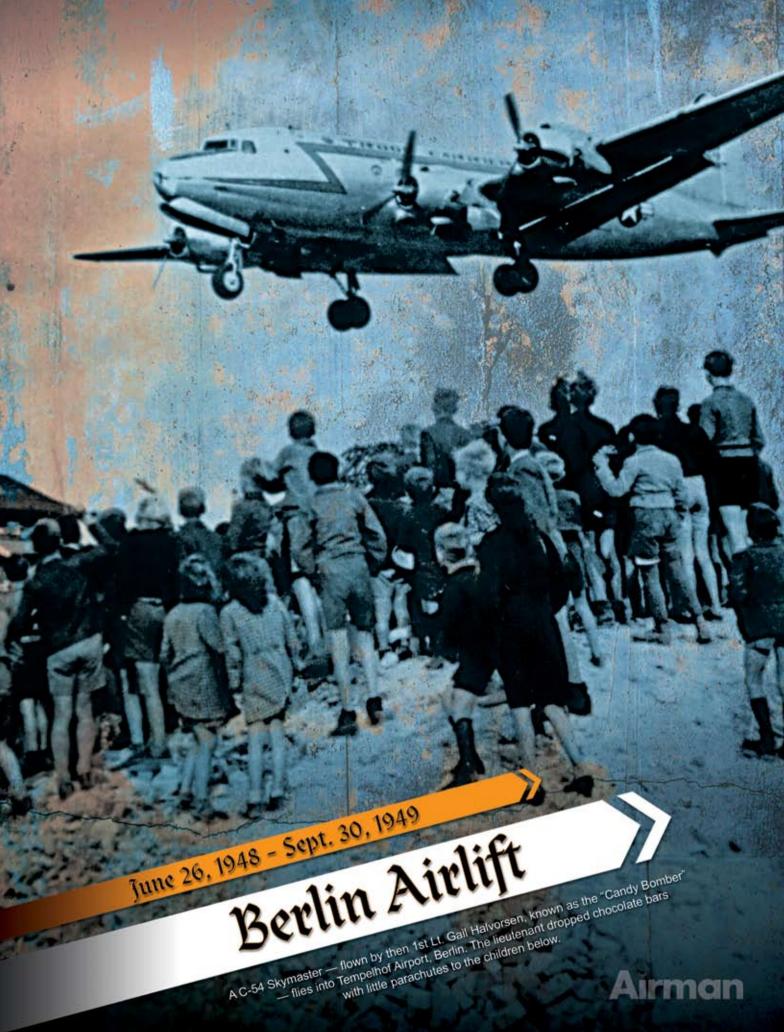
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On the Cover

Security forces Staff Sgt. Samaki Tonge typifies America's many Airmen at war. The sergeant deployed to Camp Bucca, Iraq, where he helped provide base security. He also drove 18-wheelers in convoys or worked the turret guns that protected them. Sergeant Tonge is with the 37th Security Forces Squadron, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

> desian by G. Patrick Harris photo illustration by G. Patrick Harris and Staff Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III



COMMENTS

Got something to say about Airman? Write us at editor@afnews.af.mil, or visit www.af.mil/news/ 🦂 airman, to share views with fellow readers.

AIRMAN VILLERS

Thank you! We loved the article ["Michelle's Yellow Rose," March-April

2008]. It was beautifully written. The pictures vou chose are awesome. We are so touched and so grateful for your work in all of this. What a beautiful tribute to our beautiful Paige. Someone called our home yesterday, a man who is retired from the Air Force and who now works on an Air Force base. He had just read the article and was so moved by it he had to call us. He spoke with our son, Corey, and said he was so proud to be part of the Air

Force because of Airman like Paige, and that he was praying for our family. Thank you for keeping us connected to the Air

Force family! Blessings.

Michelle Villers

Norton, Ohio

I really got choked up when I read the article about Airman Paige Villers and the virus that ended her life ["Michelle's Yellow Rose," March-April 2008]. My wife and I have two great kids, ages 27 and 24, and a grandson who just turned 4 months old. We cannot begin to imagine what the Villers family is going through. I want them to know our thoughts and prayers are with them. The writer did such a good job of writing about this that the reader experiences the emotions of not only the Villers family, but also the Wilford-Hall Medical Center staff. The commander of Wilford Hall should be very proud of the teamwork of all the dedicated staff that took care of Airman Villers. The way they devoted themselves to her care, and tried to help her overcome this sickness speaks volumes of the professionalism and dedication of this medical team.

Ed Love

Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla.

I just finished reading the story about Airman Paige Villers ["Michelle's Yellow Rose," March-April 2008]and let me tell

> you, it strikes deep into a person's soul to see the determination of Airmen like Paige. We saw folks like her enlisting in the days following Sept. 11, 2001. But today it seems people of her motivation are few and far between. My heart goes out to her family and friends. But I also envy them, to be given the opportunity to know someone with this much determination. I'm sure Paige was a great inspiration to all who knew her. It makes

me proud to know that she was once part of our Air Force.

Master Sgt. John P Barnklau

31st Intelligence Squadron Fort Gordon, Ga.

First, let me comment on how great this story is ["Michelle's Yellow Rose," March-April 2008]. It gave me a sense of pride that the men and women of the Air Force did not give up on this Airman, and made it possible for her to graduate from basic training and receive her Airman's Coin. I do have a guestion about the picture on Page 16. Would you happen to know why it says Iraq on her headstone? I don't want to speculate, but it seems odd to me that it says Iraq when, according to the story, it seems as though she died while at Wilford Hall [Medical Center, San Antoniol.

Staff Sgt. Carrie McDonald

Instructor, CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes Airman Leadership School McConnell Air Force Base, Kan.

Editor's note: There's a good answer for your question. The director of the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery said the reason Airman Villers' headstone has Iraq on it is because she died while serving during the Iraq war era.





This "warrior" thing is spiraling way out of control. Your "Home Front Warriors" headline [January-February 2008] is outrageously preposterous. While I'm all for the "total force" concept, calling a stateside civilian support employee a warrior is just ridiculous. I applaud them for their service to the country and appreciate their efforts; however they do not, and will not Junless they decide to actually put on a uniform] fit the definition of warrior, which is someone engaged in or experienced in warfare. As more Airmen join sister-service comrades in harm's way, it pains me to see the term warrior thrown about so lightly. The term carries great honor and pride with it. A synonym for warrior is "combatant," which civilians cannot be, according to the Geneva Convention. They do not participate in combat operations, and in fact it would be illegal for them to do so. Don't get me wrong. Department of Defense civilians providing maintenance, administration, safety and security management are valuable and beneficial to the Air Force. But I implore vou, and everyone else, to reserve the term warrior for those of us in uniform who are lawful combatants and carry the fight to our enemies — while keeping our homeland safe.

> 1st Lt. Brendan Hering Barksdale Air Force Base, La.





THE "BOOK"

The Book 2008 [February-March issue] is another truly great and near flawless annual edition. I was a little disappointed when perusing the missiles pages when I didn't see the AGM-114 Hellfire included, though Hellfire missiles hang from the MQ-9 Reaper and its little brother, the MQ-1B Predator, pictured on the cover

and Page 25. I believe it was for Army helicopter use, but the Air Force also uses it on unmanned aircraft weapon. Is that why it didn't make the cut?

Col. William Malec

Chief of Airspace and Airfield Operations Division Air Mobility Command Scott Air Force Base, Mo.

Editor's note: Good catch, colonel. We called Air Combat Command's weapons folks, who said the Air Force used to get its Hellfire missiles from the Army. Now the Air Force buys its own missiles, making them part of the inventory. We'll include the Hellfire in the next almanac issue.

First, I would like to thank your staff on a great magazine [February-March 2008]. I've always found reading Airman very enjoyable. The only negative thing — you didn't show Andersen Air Force Base,



Guam, in the map. I'm from Guam and get the feeling we're not important enough for you to at least include us on the map. That is a disservice, being a retiree and now a federal civilian employee. We have a contingent of bombers and other aircraft that rotate out of here. We have a vital mission we do 24-7 like all other bases. We're the only piece of U.S. real estate in

this part of the Pacific. To omit us from the map that shows all other bases, including those in foreign countries, just leaves a bad impression to all of us out here. We may just be a small dot on the map, but we can project major force when necessary, both in the air and sea. So please include Andersen in your next map. I hate seeing "Not Shown" next to our base.

Frankie C. Benavente

Andersen Air Force Base, Guam

Editor's note: You're right. We'll put Guam on the map in the next almanac issue.

The Book 2008 [February-March issue] is one of the finest references I've seen. Very comprehensive and extremely useful. Congratulations on a superb effort. Well done.

Retired Col. Joe Panza

Executive Director Air University Foundation Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.



Official magazine of the U.S. Air Force May/June 2008, Volume LII, Number 4

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AIR FORCE SECRETARY, CHIEF OF STAFF DETAIL HOW AIRMEN WILL CONTINUE SAFEGUARDING AMERICA TOMORROW

ow will the Air Force continue to safeguard the United States in the future? By flying and fighting of course.

But charting the Air Force's strategy for the future is not that simple.

What Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne and Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. T. Michael Moseley did — apart from dealing with the war on terrorism, procuring weapons systems and solving basing issues — was create a strategy to guide the Air Force into the future.

Their strategies not only redefine the nation's air power for the 21st century, they also detail how to ensure the Air Force continues safeguarding the nation, its interests and ideals by dominating air, space and cyberspace.

Why must the Air Force do that? How will it do it? The two answer these questions in their two leadership

Secretary Wynne's paper answers the why. It establishes policy and conveys the strategic vision for the Air Force.

General Moseley's paper charts Air Force strategy for the next two decades and defines the Air Force's indispensable role in promoting and defending the national interest.

Together, the plans support a strong, capable Air Force that's ready to fight today, while at the same time preparing to fight in the future. That includes what Global Vigilance, Global Reach and Global Power provides the joint team.

To learn more about what the future has in store for the Air Force, review the secretary's paper on the Air Force portal at https://www.af.mil under Spread the Word and click on the Strategic Communication Home Page. Review the chief's paper on Air Force Link at www.af.mil/library.

The following pages highlight some of their key points.







SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE MICHAEL WYNNE'S PAPER, "AIR FORCE STRATEGY: SOVEREIGN OPTIONS FOR SECURING GLOBAL STABILITY AND PROSPERITY," IS A STRATEGIC PLAN ABOUT HOW THE AIR FORCE OF TODAY WILL TACKLE THE CHALLENGES OF TOMORROW.

NUMEROUS ACTORS, RANGING FROM RISING MAJOR POWERS TO GLOBAL TERRORIST GROUPS, HAVE THE CAPABILITY AND DESIRE TO DISRUPT THE EXISTING SYSTEM TO ACHIEVE THEIR OWN ENDS.



Staff Sgt. Grant Crandel checks an MQ-1 Predator before the unmanned aircraft takes off on an area familiarization flight from Ali Base, Iraq. Test flights allow Predator aircrews, who fly the aircraft from a stateside base, and ground crews to learn the local conditions and thoroughly check their equipment. Sergeant Crandel deployed from Creech Air Force Base, Nev.

IN RESPONSE TO CURRENT AND EMERGING THREATS, THE AIR FORCE HAS IMPLEMENTED A STRATEGY BASED ON PROVIDING UNITED STATES POLICY MAKERS WITH SOVEREIGN OPTIONS FOR THE NATION'S DEFENSE.

THE UNITED STATES STANDS TODAY AT A STRATEGIC CROSSROADS CHARACTERIZED BY RAPID GROWTH OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, DIFFUSION OF TECHNOLOGY, NEW AND INCREASINGLY COMPLEX ECONOMIC AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND POTENTIAL COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES AND INFLUENCE.



Master Sgt. Shani Prewitt laughs with children in the village of Nagad, Djibouti, after a concert. She's a vocalist with U.S. Air Forces Central's band "Live Round." The band performed morale and community outreach concerts and took part in other nation-building activities.



A Delta II rocket lifts off from Space Launch Complex 17A at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla. The rocket carried an Air Force Global Positioning System satellite. It was the first Delta II launched from the cape in 2008.

GIVEN THIS SPECTRUM OF THREATS, THE UNITED STATES MUST FIELD AN AIR FORCE CAPABLE OF ASSURING ITS ALLIES, DISSUADING AND DETERRING POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES AND, IF NECESSARY, DEFEATING THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO BECOME ENEMIES.



Maj. Tim Hart, Capt. Curtis Knighten and Capt. James Garza conduct air surveillance and command and control operations from an E-3 Sentry airborne warning and control aircraft. The three are with the 960th Airborne Air Control Squadron, Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.

THE AIR FORCE'S ABILITY TO BE SIMULTANEOUSLY DOMINANT IN AIR, SPACE AND CYBERSPACE HAS FORMED THE FOUNDATION FROM WHICH IT PROVIDES SOVEREIGN OPTIONS.

photo by Tach. Sqt. Cecilio Ricardo

Capt. Jason Simmons (back, left) and Staff Sgt. Clinton Tips (back, right) provide critical software updates for Air Force users across the globe from Barksdale Air Force Base, La. They also protect the cyber domain and electromagnetic operations, ensuring freedom of action across all operational domains.

THE AIR FORCE COMBINES ITS CAPABILITY IN THE DOMAINS OF AIR, SPACE AND CYBERSPACE TO DELIVER GLOBAL VIGILANCE, GLOBAL REACH AND GLOBAL POWER TO THE JOINT FORCE.



A C-17 Globemaster III approaches a KC-135 Stratotanker to refuel off the coast of Hawaii. The transport is from the 535th Airlift Squadron at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. The tanker is from the 909th Air Refueling Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan.

IMPLEMENTING THIS STRATEGY DEMANDS A FOCUS ON FIELDING A FORCE OF HIGHLY TRAINED AIRMEN WITH AN ADVANTAGE IN TECHNOLOGY AND A FORCE STRUCTURE SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE THE ASSURANCE OF A UNITED STATES PRESENCE.



Trainees march back to camp after a long day of duty at defensive fighting positions and practicing self-aid and buddy care techniques. The Airmen took part in the field training exercise during basic training's Warrior Week at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

(WE) MUST BUILD AN AIR FORCE THAT MEETS
THE REQUIREMENTS OF TODAY'S COMBATANT
COMMANDERS WHILE ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES
THEIR SUCCESSORS WILL FACE IN THE FUTURE.



Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley announces that Lightning II was the name chosen for the Lockheed Martin F-35.



CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AIR FORCE GEN. T. MICHAEL MOSELEY'S PAPER, "THE NATION'S GUARDIANS, AMERICA'S 21ST CENTURY AIR FORCE," IS HIS VISION FOR ENSURING THE AIR FORCE'S FUTURE ABILITY TO FLY, FIGHT AND WIN IN AIR, SPACE AND CYBERSPACE.

THE AIR FORCE IS THE GUARDIAN OF AMERICA'S FREEDOM, SECURITY AND PROSPERITY — THE NATION'S FORCE OF FIRST AND LAST RESORT.

WE PROVIDE GLOBAL VIGILANCE, GLOBAL REACH AND GLOBAL POWER IN AND THROUGH AIR, SPACE AND CYBERSPACE.



Senior Airman Richard Rodriguez stands guard on the perimeter of Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq. Below him, an Army convoy returns from a patrol outside the base. Airman Rodriguez is with the 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron.



An F-15E Strike Eagle refuels from a KC-135 Stratotanker high over Afghanistan before a combat mission.

THROUGH CROSS-DOMAIN DOMINANCE, THE AIR FORCE GRANTS JOINT FREEDOM OF MANEUVER IN ALL WARFIGHTING DOMAINS: LAND, SEA, AIR, SPACE AND CYBERSPACE.



A B-2 Spirit leads a formation of Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps aircraft during a fly over of the USS Kitty Hawk, USS Ronald Reagan and USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike groups in the western Pacific Ocean. The massive formation kicked off a joint, multi-nation exercise.

TODAY'S CONFLUENCE OF GLOBAL TRENDS ALREADY FORESHADOWS SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES TO OUR ORGANIZATION, SYSTEMS, CONCEPTS AND DOCTRINE.



Airmen monitor world events from the joint space operations center at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. They control satellites and oversee global ballistic missile warning, spacelift and 28 weapon systems, including those supporting the global war on terrorism.

THE AIR FORCE MUST ANTICIPATE INNOVATIVE COMBINATIONS OF TRADITIONAL AND NEW CONCEPTS, DOCTRINES, WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES.

Staff Sgt. Kristoffer Solesbee (right) points out identification features and safety concerns of unexploded ordnance to Staff Sgt. Christopher Stoup. The Airmen helped the Iraqi army's 5th Iraqi Army Bomb Disposal Company. Insurgents build roadside bombs from such unexploded ordnance.

AMERICA'S AIR FORCE WILL SUCCEED IN THE 21ST CENTURY ONLY BY DEVELOPING AND RESOURCING A COHERENT STRATEGY THAT CLOSES THE GAP BETWEEN ENDS AND MEANS.



F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot Maj. Shawn West returns to Balad Air Base, Iraq, after a combat mission. Major West is with the 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Wing.

REDEFINING THE AIR FORCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY IS AN URGENT NATIONAL SECURITY REQUIREMENT — NOT A LUXURY WE CAN DEFER.



Staff Sgt. Bruce Thompson fires at "aggressor" forces with an M-4 assault rifle from a Humvee simulator at Creech Air Force Base, Nev. The system is the first Department of Defense 360-degree simulator. Sergeant Thompson is an integrated base defense instructor with the 99th Ground Combat Training Squadron.

To succeed, we must redefine airpower for the 21st century.

Gen. T. Michael Moseley





C-130 HERCULES PILOT THE JOY OF FLYING LOW AND SLOW

BY MASTER SGT. KIMBERLY SPENCER AND PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. DEMETRIUS LESTER.



CAPT. MALINDA **HAMMOND** >>

DEPLOYED UNIT:

455th Air Expeditionary Wing Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan

HOME UNIT AND BASE:

136th Airlift Wing Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas

HOMETOWN:

Gadsden, Ala.

DEPLOYMENTS:

_ '

s the sun slowly dips below Afghanistan's horizon, Capt. Malinda Hammond is just beginning her duty day. She walks briskly toward one of the workhorses of the Air Force fleet, a C-130 Hercules, heading to the cockpit.

After six years on active duty and twoand-a-half years in the Texas Air National Guard, she slips into the roll of aircraft commander as easily as pulling on her well-worn flight gloves.

It is a good fit for the captain who grew up around aircraft and military jargon. She is the daughter of a Marine aircraft mechanic who opened his own aircraft maintenance shop after his tour in the service ended.

"I can still remember my first flight in the backseat of my dad's Piper [Cub aircraft]," she said. "Everything looked so different from up in the air. You could see for miles. It was very peaceful. I remember thinking how cool it was; like riding a big roller coaster."

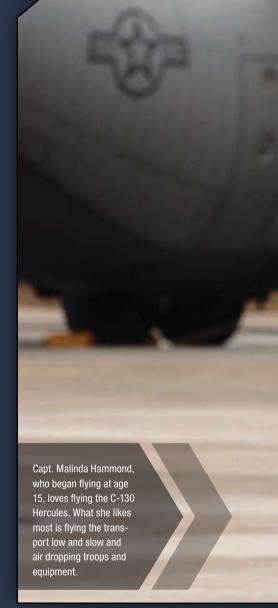
At 15, she began taking flying lessons. Those lessons led to a career in the Air Force flying the venerable Hercules, a cargo aircraft that has been ferrying servicemembers and cargo since the mid-1950s.

"I love the C-130 mission," the captain said. "I love flying in low and dropping troops and their equipment out of the back. Because we're a smaller airframe, we can get into the out-of-the-way locations," she said.

The C-130 is in its element over Afghanistan's rugged mountains, where it flies primarily tactical airlift missions for the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing's at Bagram Air Base. The wing provides expeditionary combat support to U.S. and coalition forces operating in the country.

When it's time to deliver cargo and people, the Hercules is perfect for landing at remote outposts in hostile areas that have only short, rough, dirt landing strips.

"The C-130 is the optimal airframe for this theater because of its short takeoff and landing capability," said Lt. Col.
John Ptak, the 774th Expeditionary Airlift
Squadron commander. "This capability,
coupled with the ability to airdrop supplies to troops in the field, make the airframe extremely versatile. This dual role
allows the C-130 to resupply the Army in



most situations and conditions."

The flexible design of the C-130 enables aircrews to configure it for many different missions, allowing one aircraft to perform the role of many. It can carry people, palletized equipment, floor-loaded material, airdrop platforms, container delivery system bundles or vehicles.

One of Captain Hammond's more difficult missions was a medical evacuation.

"We were moving an injured patient out of Mosul, Iraq. He had an open chest wound and I was so afraid he was going to die before we could get him to the hospital at Balad Air Base. The toughest part



is when you come face to face with the phrase, 'and some gave their all," she said.

The aircraft commander takes her job very seriously.

"I am the final authority for any decision," the captain said. "I must balance the mission and my crew. What I mean by that is I must do everything I can to make sure the mission gets accomplished, but not at the expense of my crewmembers."

Captain Hammond is well-

"I LOVE THE FREEDOM OF FLYING, AND I LOVE FLYING THE C-130," SHE SAID. "IT HAS TAKEN ME TO SOME GREAT PLACES AND GREAT EXPERIENCES. I JOINED THE MILITARY SO I COULD LIVE AND FLY ALL **OVER THE WORLD."**

suited for the job, which may be due in part to her family history of military service, although she is the first woman in the family

"I love the freedom of flying, and I love flying the C-130," she said. "It has taken me to some great places and great experiences.

"I joined the military so I could live and fly all over the world," she said.

That's just what she is doing, low and slow.



ORVILLE F. DESJARLAIS JR. AND PHOTOS BY SENIOR AIRMAN JULIANN



TED FIELD >

361st Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron and 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Unit, Balad Air Base, Iraq

136th Airlift Wing Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas

Whitehall, Ark.

Two

he thing about enemy rockets and mortars is they don't distinguish between man or woman, local national or foreigner, active-duty Airman or Air Force contractor.

So when the alarm of an imminent attack sounds, all most people can do is dive for cover. Most don't get a chance to engage their attackers.

Ted Field doesn't get a chance either. But the MQ-1 Predator he helps maintain as a contractor does have the ability to strike back. It's something he's witnessed first hand.

During August 2007, enemy forces hit Balad Air Base, Iraq, with rockets and mortar fire. Mr. Field dove for cover, too.

"One time, a Predator was on a local mission on base defense, looking for bad guys shooting mortars, and we spotted one of the enemy," the retired Air Force chief master sergeant said. (The Predator) responded to the attack and we saw our aircraft find the guy and neutralize him. We were right there and we got to see it live as the Predator became the attacker."

Mr. Field wasn't always a fan of the unmanned aircraft. He got his first sight of the 2,250-pound, 135-mph-flying aircraft at Creech Air Force Base, Nev. He arrived at the desert base after a tour with a unit maintaining lightening-fast F-16 Fighting Falcons in South Korea.

"My first reaction to being assigned to the Predator squadron was that I didn't want to work on it because I wanted to stay with fighters," he said. "I was ingrained in the F-16 community."

But after seeing the Predator, he said it was easy to see the future of the platform.

"I was seeing another aspect of the Air Force," Mr. Field said. "The time I spent in the Predator program proved to be the best years of my Air Force career."

He said the Predator gives the Air Force the sustained reconnaissance mission needed to spot the enemy in the field. One of the biggest benefits is Predators can stay over a target area for hours.

"We have longevity and legs," Mr. Field said. "We can spend a long time up there looking at the target, or we could just be



another set of eyes looking for someone on the ground. We can look over the next ridge or behind a building. Anywhere the guys on the ground can't see we're able to see. We can bring the fight to the enemy."

Those are some of the reasons why the remote-controlled aircraft is in such high demand over the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. Keeping it flying night and day takes a big team. Predator contractors help the around-the-clock mission by providing relief to active-duty maintainers who must deploy time and again to support what the Air Force calls "a high-demand, low-density platform."



"It gives active-duty members a chance to take a break from a deployment or to train on the MQ-9 Reaper," he said.

The Reaper is the Predator's bigger, faster, stronger and deadlier cousin. It can haul the same missiles carried by F-16s and can reach speeds of up to 230 mph. Since it's the next generation unmanned weapons system, the unmanned aircraft community must find the time to get proficient on the new system — thus the civilian contractors.

After retirement, Mr. Field didn't have a problem trading in his eight stripes

THE TIME I SPENT IN

THE PREDATOR PROGRAM

PROVED TO BE

THE BEST YEARS OF MY

AIR FORCE CAREER."

for civilian clothes as an Air Combat Command contractor. He doesn't see much of a difference from when he was in uniform.

"We still follow all the Air Force rules, technical data and safety precautions," he said. "We train people the same way since most of us in the company have a military background."

"All (contractors) here are working hard, for endless hours," he said. "We have the same commitment to the mission as those in the Air Force. And you can attest to that from the amount of ex-military members working for our company. We're still doing the same thing."



WEATHER FORECASTER LOOKING FOR A BREAK IN THE CLOUDS

BY STAFF SGT. BENNIE J. DAVIS III AND PHOTOS BY SENIOR AIRMAN TABITHA KUYKENDALL



STAFF SGT. MICHAEL A. RAGSDALE >>

DEPLOYED UNIT:

376th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan

HOME UNIT AND BASE:

6th Air Mobility Wing, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

HOMETOWN:

Greensville. S.C.

DEPLOYMENTS:

Two

n a miserable winter night at Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, Staff Sgt. Michael Ragsdale was working the graveyard shift.

Outside, a thick fog cut visibility to less than a quarter mile. The January 2008 temperatures averaged 30 degrees below normal, the country's coldest on record.

The cold weather wasn't all on his mind. High overhead, a KC-135 Stratotanker circled, waiting to land. With fuel running low, the aircrew wanted to land their aging aircraft, which doesn't like cold weather.

At times like this it "can get intense," he said, while monitoring his radar. Then he walked outside to check the visibility.

Because the weather made it too dangerous to land, the pilot wanted to divert to another airfield. But that could cut short his mission capabilities.

Then Sergeant Ragsdale noticed the fog started to lift. He hit the airwaves — calling the tanker to tell the pilot the break in the clouds would allow a safe landing.

"Moments like this are a reminder to how important weather forecasting is to the Air Force mission," Sergeant Ragsdale said. "It gives me a sense of personal satisfaction as well."

Weather Airmen provide a service crucial to operations at Manas, home of the Air Force's lead refueling wing and the busiest mobility hub for operations in Afghanistan. The base, located in the northernmost region of Kyrgyzstan, sits in a "bowl" surrounded by mountain ranges. This can create erratic winter weather.

"Unpredictable weather plays a crucial role in everyday operations, particularly in the flying missions," Sergeant Ragsdale said.

Weather delays or cancellations may prevent aerial tankers from reaching aircraft over Afghanistan — directly impacting ground and air operations.

The sergeant is used to bad weather. Having grown up on the South Carolina coast, a place routinely struck by hurricanes, he was fascinated with weather and its effects on the community. He would track storms and hurricanes, providing family members with forecasts and updates. Little did he know one day he'd be doing the same thing in the Air Force.

Analyzing weather conditions, prepar-

ing forecasts and issuing weather warnings is exactly why he joined the Air Force. It is his calling, Sergeant Ragsdale said.

During technical training at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., he learned the basic principles of meteorology. That included how to forecast weather elements such as clouds, visibility, winds and atmospheric pressure. And he learned how to read and interpret satellite imagery, climatology reports, computerized weather prediction models and Doppler radar imagery.

Sergeant Ragsdale said his Air Force career has been an adventure.

"One thing most people don't realize about Air Force weather forecasters is that we support all U.S. Army weather operations. The Army does not have weather forecasters," Sergeant Ragsdale said. "We can be stationed at any Army or Air Force location around the world."

The Air Force uses state-of-the-art equipment and highly trained Airmen to provide accurate forecasts. Customers are sometimes critical of forecasts. Sergeant Ragsdale takes it in stride. He knows forecasting isn't an exact science and sudden weather changes are not uncommon.

"Mother Nature is unpredictable and we're not psychics," he said. "I can't add up the number of times I've heard 'How's the weather?' or 'weather's easy, just walk outside."

But the sergeant knows there's a big difference in the forecasts he provides and what people receive from local television weather reports.

"The difference between me and the TV weatherman is that if he says there is no chance for rain and it rains, the worst-case scenario is you didn't bring an umbrella and you get wet," Sergeant Ragsdale said. "On the Air Force side, if my forecast is drastically wrong, the worst-case scenario is a potential disaster."

On any given day, Sergeant Ragsdale's forecast could save lives in the air and on the battlefield. That realization is what keeps him sharp and on his game.

As the fog lifted over Manas, and with Sergeant Ragsdale's help, the circling tanker dropped its landing gear. It made its approach and its wheels touched down safely on the Manas runway.

Then, almost on cue, the skies sealed back up.





rotecting people is his business, and Lt. Col. Walter Manwill takes it personally.

The former Brigham Young University offensive lineman once protected his quarterback Jim McMahon, who later went on to the Chicago Bears and 1985 Super Bowl fame.

Today the colonel protects hundreds of American and coalition warriors, sending in overwhelming, integrated airpower to block the enemy's every move.

Colonel Manwill is director of the combat operations division at U.S. Air Forces Central's combined air and space operations center at a base in Southwest Asia. He leads

a team of military professionals that ensures airpower is overhead, especially for ground forces in Afghanistan and Iraq who come in contact with the enemy.

Today, there are no cheering crowds, and the young people the colonel helps protect don't even know his name. But they do know about his team and count on the job it does.

"I know for a fact that if I've got troops in contact [with the enemy], the U.S. Air Force will be there," said Army Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander of the Multinational Division-Center, Iraq.

"These are my Soldiers who were in danger of insurgents overrunning them, and the Air

Force came in and took care of the problem, more than 250 times," the general said.

It's an impressive statistic.

But Colonel Manwill recognizes it's not about numbers. It's about the patriots on the ground surviving life-or-death enemy engagements because of the effective application of airpower, he said.

"You hear about 18- and 19-year-old kids getting blown up, and then you see how we're stopping that from here," he said, pointing to the giant screen that helps him monitor the ongoing air war. "It makes a difference."

Since arriving in July 2007, the colonel's combat operations team has contributed to





LT. COL. WALTER MANWILL 🕿

U.S. Central Command Air Forces combined air and space operations center, Southwest Asia

Will get new assignment after present tour.

Boise, Idaho

THAT IF I'VE GOT TROOPS IN CONTACT, THE U.S. AIR FORCE WILL BE THERE." SAID

the execution of more than 20.000 combat sorties over Iraq and Afghanistan. The team's responsibilities also include the direction of airpower for U.S. Central Command's theater of operation. This area encompasses 27 nations, from Sudan to Kazakhstan and all points in between.

The colonel's team may not plan every mission — that's the combat plans division's job — but the combat operations team is intimately involved in the execution of every

"I make sure the plans we develop are executable," Colonel Manwill said, sounding more like a football coach than the lineman

he once was.

When battlespace conditions change, center Airmen adapt immediately. They often use the phrase "the enemy gets a vote."

That means if the enemy engages coalition forces, or a high-level individual target emerges, then the center must realign aircraft to protect the troops in contact with the enemy or to take advantage of a vulnerable, high-level target.

In Afghanistan, for example, more than 50 coalition Soldiers battled Taliban forces for 19 straight hours.

Throughout the fight, Colonel Manwill's team kept the components of airpower over-

head — everything from attack aircraft to tankers for refueling. This created an advantage the enemy couldn't deal with. A mixture of precision air strikes, strafing runs and shows of force led to a coalition victory.

Fortunately for coalition forces, Colonel Manwill is no rookie.

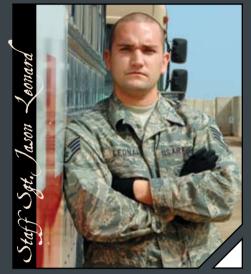
"People will die if you don't do your job," the colonel said.

The colonel joined the Air Force because he missed being part of a team, and the excitement of game day. And though his job titles have changed from one deployment to the next, his primary duty remains the same — protecting teammates. 🥪



DSPACE MEDICAL

BY RICH LAMANCE AND PHOTOS BY SENIOR AIRMAN JULIANNE SHOWALT



STAFF SGT. JASON LEONARD >>

DEPLOYED UNIT:

332nd Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility, Balad Air Base, Iraq

HOME UNIT AND BASE:

439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass.

HOMETOWN:

Granby, Mass.

DEPLOYMENTS:

true oasis in the desert, the Air Force theater hospital at Balad Air Base, Iraq, is one of the most advanced field hospitals ever used in wartime.

The survival rate — for American servicemembers, Iraqi military and police, civilians, even insurgents — is more than 95 percent. That's the highest ever for any conflict, U.S. military officials said.

A primary reason for the success is the quality of the Airmen — like aerospace medical technician Staff Sgt. Jason Leonard — who work at Balad's 332nd Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility. He and his peers have the vital task of stabilizing critically wounded patients before their transport out of the hospital.

Then the facility's Airmen help to safely transfer some patients to larger hospitals in Germany or the United States.

"The timing of movement for critical patients is crucial to their recovery, involving stability and increased care," Sergeant Leonard said. "The least amount of time spent in transit to and from the aircraft is paramount."

Sergeant Leonard said during this influx of activity, volunteers are an important part of the success story. Everyone from F-16 Fighting Falcon crew chiefs to firefighters get involved with moving patients safely to and from aircraft.

"When the volunteers arrive, I make sure they have all of their personal protective equipment and know our commands for lifting and moving patients safely," he said.

Because the Balad hospital is basically a stop where Airmen stabilize critically wounded patients before transporting them to larger hospitals, Sergeant Leonard and his peers find themselves going through the same process twice, only in reverse.

"We receive patients from throughout the region," Sergeant Leonard said. "After leaving the aircraft with the patients, those needing to be seen in the emergency room are taken there.

"Then we unload the remainder of our patients into the staging facility," he said. "I help our baggage technician with the customs checks and then assist with taking patients' vital signs and help assign them to their beds."

Sergeant Leonard said units like his are



critical to the success of the aeromedical evacuation system, which reaches from the battlefield to stateside hospitals.

"If my unit was not a step in the evacuation process, patients would have no place to be housed and cared for while awaiting an aircraft to take them to the next echelon of care," he said.

Theater hospitals don't have sufficient beds or people to care for non-critical patients awaiting transportation. Plus, most hospital staff members are not experienced in loading and off-loading patients from different types of aircraft, the sergeant said.

"Air evacuation crews rely on us to make



sure patients meet aircraft at the right times, with the right medication to ensure an uneventful flight," he said. "Very simply, the air evacuation system would not work without the staging facility staff."

However, it's during a crisis, when mass casualties arrive from the field, that the sergeant says is the most telling example of just how instrumental he and his unit have become in the effort to save lives.

"During one of my early weeks in country, we were called to support a helicopter pad for a mass casualty evacuation. As helicopters kept coming in with more wounded, it was astounding to see all the people, from EMTs [emergency medical technicians], doctors and nurses, to volunteers who had never done anything medical in their careers, work in such a fluid manner.

"Every person out there was saving lives," Sergeant Leonard said.

As the wounded arrived people lifted the them onto litters.

There were "people triaging, people exposing wounds — and all of this within the 90 seconds before the patients even got to the emergency room," he said.

"Personally, it was comforting to know if one of my friends or loved ones was serving in Iraq, and wounded, I would have the utmost confidence in our medical staff's ability to get them home alive," he said.

Balad is Sergeant Leonard's first deployment. But for all its hardships, the sixyear Air Force Reserve veteran plans to reenlist. Iraq has been an eye-opener.

"Sleeping has been hard because of the proximity of my bunk to the flightline and the tempo of the missions at Balad," he said.

For now, Sergeant Leonard cares for the wounded, which is no easy task.

"It makes life more difficult to see my brothers and sisters in the service injured in the line of duty," he said. "But we're making a difference here." 🥪

AVOIDING THE PLAGUE OF NON-COMBAT

It's obvious that some of the greatest dangers to Airmen serving in a war zone are insurgents, roadside bombs, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and bullets.

But what crawls around beneath their feet, sneaks into their lungs or worms its way into their minds may be just as lethal.

It's no secret that Airmen in good physical shape perform better in combat, said Lt. Col. Michael Butel, U.S. Air Forces Central chief of aerospace medicine and public health.

And the overall health of Airmen in war zones is good, he said. But these warriors are still susceptible to dangerous bug bites, respiratory illnesses and high psychological stresses.

"Overall, 99 percent of Airmen report being in good or better health, based on pre- and post-deployment health assessments," he said. "After deployments, only 8 percent of active-duty and 11 percent of reserve Airmen reported their health was worse than before deployment."

> In addition to the enemy, here are the top 10 dangers Airmen face in a war zone.

- Poor overall health. Get ready to deploy: Get in shape and don't smoke. Comply with pre-deployment disease prevention measures. Get vaccinations and health screens. Treat uniforms with permethrin
- Insect and animal bites Rules prohibit Airmen from keeping pets. But a contractor at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, adopted a pet dog that was rabid. It bit 50 people in one night. And an Airman found a dead scorpion in a rug she bought at a bazaar near Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq.

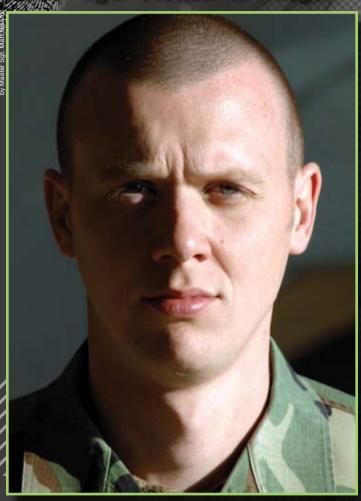
(insecticide). Pack all personal prescription medications.

- Heat and cold In Iraq and Afghanistan, heat stroke and frost bite are real dangers. Drink water and stay hydrated to prevent heat stress. Layer cold-weather clothing to avoid frost bite.
- Sexually transmitted diseases General Order 1 doesn't prohibit sex. But Airmen should practice safe sex. Young women should consider getting the new human papillornavirus vaccine that has the potential to prevent many forms of cervical cancer.
- **Psychological** Airmen endure the stress of deployment, long work hours, family separation and sometimes witness or experience trauma. Those who experience trauma should talk about it with their wingman or a combat stress control team.
- **O**phthalmology Eye trauma is real in deployed environments. Corneal abrasions from dust and sand can lead to severe eye damage. Only wear contacts after receiving commander's approval.
- **Gastrointestinal** Travelers' diarrhea is common. The usual cause: a change in schedule. Practice good hygiene and only eat approved food and drink approved water. Wash hands frequently.
- Dermatological or skin conditions Complications include heat rashes and athletes' foot. The easy remedy is to launder uniforms and change socks often. Skin conditions have historically been a significant source of nonbattle injuries in every American conflict.
- Respiratory illness High stress and sometimes crowded conditions can lead to the spread of colds and flu-like symptoms. Mandatory flu shots and good personal hygiene will prevent most outbreaks.
 - Non-battle injuries The number one problem in the war zone. Injuries occur during work, while playing sports, driving a vehicle, or even stubbing a toe while walking to the dining facility. Good operational risk management may reduce the potential for injuries.



SPIRIT CREW CHIEF

Sgt. Joshua A. Varga



My job has its challenges every day. I troubleshoot, manage short-term and long-term maintenance forecasts and training, break sweat and bust knuckles to modify, inspect, service and maintain my aircraft. And if at the end of the day I can call my aircraft airworthy, let me tell you, there is nothing more rewarding. I look back and know I defeated most challenges and my reward is putting the world's premiere bomber in the air to deter any adversary anywhere in the world. We can do it anytime, from home and away. It's happened before and I can't wait to do it again.

HOME UNIT/BASE:

509th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

CURRENT UNIT/BASE (IF DEPLOYED / TDY):

HOMETOWN:

Henniker, N.H.

ENTERED AIR FORCE:

Sept. 4, 2001

OTHER DEPLOYMENTS:

Andersen Air Force Base, Guam; 2005 and 2006

MARITAL STATUS:

Married with three children

MEET STAFF SGT. LEE JONES, AIR FORCE CYBER COMMAND.



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ABOVE ALL

AIR | SPACE | CYBERSPACE





STAFF SGT. MARK CARTER >>

DEPLOYED UNIT:

447th Aerospace Expeditionary Group

HOME UNIT AND BASE:

27th Special Operations Support Squadron, Cannon Air Force Base, N.M.

HOMETOWN:

San Antonio

DEPLOYMENTS:

Two

n airfield in a war zone is like an orchestra of aerial and ground activity.

That's the case at Sather Air Base, Iraq, located next to Baghdad International Airport. It's one busy place.

There are planes constantly landing, taking off and taxiing to and from their parking spots. Airmen are working on aircraft, loading them with munitions or filling their fuel tanks. Others unload cargo from huge airlifters or drive the vehicles that move the cargo.

Of course, there's always the threat of terrorist attacks. And Airmen must also deal with civilian air traffic.

Needless to say, there's a lot of activity. The potential for accidents is high.

In the middle of all this activity, conducting the symphony, are air traffic controllers like Staff Sgt. Mark Carter. One wrong direction could result in people dying or the loss of millions of dollars worth of equipment.

"It's a complex job," he said. "We must make sure aircraft make it to the field so the mission can be performed."

To do the job well requires great communication skills, he said.

So it's hardly surprising he feels the biggest challenge to performing his duties at Sather is communicating with his Iraqis counterparts.

"Initially, I was challenged by the language barrier," he said. "But I soon learned to be more patient. And I was able to figure out what was being said, so we could complete our mission."

That's a tall order at Sather. The base boasts one of Iraq's busiest airfields.

An average of 320 transient aircraft and 6,200 passengers pass through the base each week. In addition, ground crews unload more than 1,700 tons of cargo each week.

One major difference for controllers in a war zone is that they have to deal with things they don't normally deal with at their home bases. At Sather, it's the helicopter traffic, the sergeant said.

"It seems like there are helicopters swarming everywhere in this country," Sergeant Carter said.

Soon after arriving at the base, the sergeant had to educate himself about how to control helicopters. After a brief adjustment period to doing his mission in a war zone, he now feels comfortable with his new setting.

The sergeant admits feeling nervous when he first found out he was deploying to Iraq because of the media attention on terrorist attacks. But, to his surprise, his tour has been relatively calm.

When he first arrived at Sather in October 2007, the sergeant would often reflect at the end of each work day on the role he was playing in helping the warfighters. He was well aware of his important role of keeping the ballad of flight in tune.

"But after a few months it started to feel like just a normal day of work in the states," Sergeant Carter said.

The sergeant said his Sather tour has been an experience and, despite his earlier misgivings, "It has been extremely rewarding. I can't wait to get back home and tell my family about this deployment." 🥪

"WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THE AIRCRAFT MAKE IT TO THE FIELD SO THAT THE MISSION CAN BE PERFORMED."





Maj. Jeff Ausborn might as well move his office outside next to the flightline. It might make his job of coordinating and tracking air support a bit

s a C-130 Hercules pilot, Maj. Jeff Ausborn sees the world from high above the ground, where people and animals are indistinguishable. The world looks different when viewed through tiny cockpit windows.

But he got a different perspective while doing a ground job at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti.

The major works in the air component coordination element, where Airmen synchronize airpower needs for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

But it was when he volunteered to hand out food and water to local, destitute people, that he really saw the difference he was making.

"I got to see how the people here really live," the major said.

The ground job is not like any other he has had while flying a C-130. So different that he had to tell his children how good they have it living in the United States.

"Compared to how we live in the states, the people here don't live very well," he said. "Those who live outside the city live in rock huts with thatched roofs, tin walls, no windows or doors.

"Water is left for them in 55-gallon drums alongside the road. People in the city live in what is comparable to the slums — but they're a little better off."

As deputy of the element office, he doesn't always have the time hand out food and water. But he gets to help other people in Africa in a different way. He helps coordinate air travel for people, cargo, humanitarian supplies and dignitaries.

The airlift workhorse for the region is the trusty C-130 Hercules.

"The C-130s allow us to take people and cargo to remote locations in Africa," the major said. "We can land our C-130s almost anywhere."

When landing zones are too small for





MAJ. JEFF AUSBORN 🕿

DEPLOYED UNIT: ..

Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, Camp Lemonier, Diibouti

HOME UNIT AND BASE:

43rd Airlift Wina. Pope Air Force Base, N.C.

HOMETOWN:

Gadsden, Ala.

DEPLOYMENTS:

Four

"OUR MAIN FUNCTION IS COORDINATION. WE TRY TO SMOOTH OUT THE PROCESS TO TRY AND HELP OTHERS MAKE THEIR JOBS EASIER, **BETTER AND MORE EFFICIENT.**"

even a Hercules, the element coordinates air support with local civilian bush pilots. He says it's quicker, safer and more affordable to use bush pilots than coordinating a ground convoy.

The joint task force helps prevent conflict, promote regional stability and protect coalition interests. It does this by providing locals clean water, functional schools and improved roadways.

The coordination element finds air transportation for flights to many countries, including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, the Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Yemen. Other "areas on

interest" include Comoros. Mauritius and Madagascar. Operations have been ongoing since 2002.

Major Ausborn said his toughest challenge is coordinating and tracking air support without reliable communications.

"Cell phones and DSN lines don't work here sometimes, so we try to pass on information through our joint operations center," he said.

"Our main function is coordination," he said. "We try to smooth out the process to try and help others make their jobs easier, better and more efficient."

He says the mission is worthwhile.

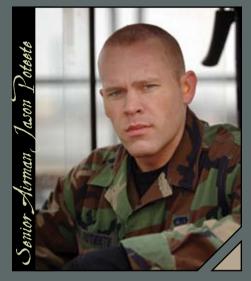
"What we're doing here is a very good thing. It's about helping Africa as a whole," the major said. "I think this is a very good mission.

"Knowing that we're helping in Kenya and Comoros is very rewarding — and that I'm one of the guys putting all that airlift together." 🥪



SPORTATION

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. SCOTT WAGERS



SENIOR AIRMAN JASON POTEETE >>

DEPLOYED UNIT:

455th Air Expeditionary Wing Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan

HOME UNIT AND BASE:

726th Air Mobility Squadron, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany

Dallas

DEPLOYMENTS:

ow do you take a disoriented gaggle of travel-weary passengers, 50 tons of equipment, high-tech weaponry and anything else you can strap to a pallet and stuff it into the back of a war-zone bound cargo plane in less than three hours?

Give up?

Then ask air transportation specialist Senior Airman Jason Poteete. He's been doing that non-stop since December of 2003.

Now, four years after arriving fresh out of tech school and hitting the ground running at Rhein Main Air Base, Germany, he knows his job well. He learned his trade while pulling 12-hour shifts at the base. When it closed, he moved to Spangdahlem Air Base, a two-hour drive away.

Today he says the biggest challenge he faces is getting aircraft mission-ready and off the ground before their scheduled layover ends.

"This can be as little as 90 minutes or as long as 24 hours," said Airman Poteete, of Dallas. "There can be multiple planes needing your attention — all at the same time — and the only way to do this successfully is to work together as a team."

Airman Poteete's team at Spangdahlem consists of about 10 "aerial porters" per shift. Once an inbound plane calls in to report its arrival time and cargo load, the team determines where the plane will be going next and what cargo in their inventory needs load on the plane before it takes off for that destination.

"Because we try to utilize each plane to its max, we must carefully decide what cargo will fit, how to load it and what assets to use to get the job done before takeoff," he said.

Other team members transport passengers to and from the plane, ensure they have lodging if staying overnight or provide box lunches for those continuing their journey. The team also restocks the plane's expendable supplies and pillows, blankets, ear plugs and air sickness bags. They also clean the floors and empty the latrines.

The team works long hours in a high-operations tempo. Airmen must react fast and know the safety regulation governing how



to pack and transport all kinds of cargo.

"We must know how to secure a 25-ton mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle so it doesn't bust lose at 35,000 feet and endanger the crew and passengers," he said.

Airman Poteete and "port dawgs" across the Air Force have moved more than 6.5 million passengers (populations of the Los Angeles and Houston metro areas) and some 2.8 million tons of cargo (weight of nearly 30 Nimitz-class aircraft carriers) on more than 400,000 sorties since Sept. 11, 2001, Air Mobility command officials said.

The numbers are impressive and bear witness to the important role air transpor-



tation specialists play in the war on terrorism. Winning the fight requires agile logistics, 21st Expeditionary Mobility Task Force commander Brig. Gen. Alfred J. Stewart said.

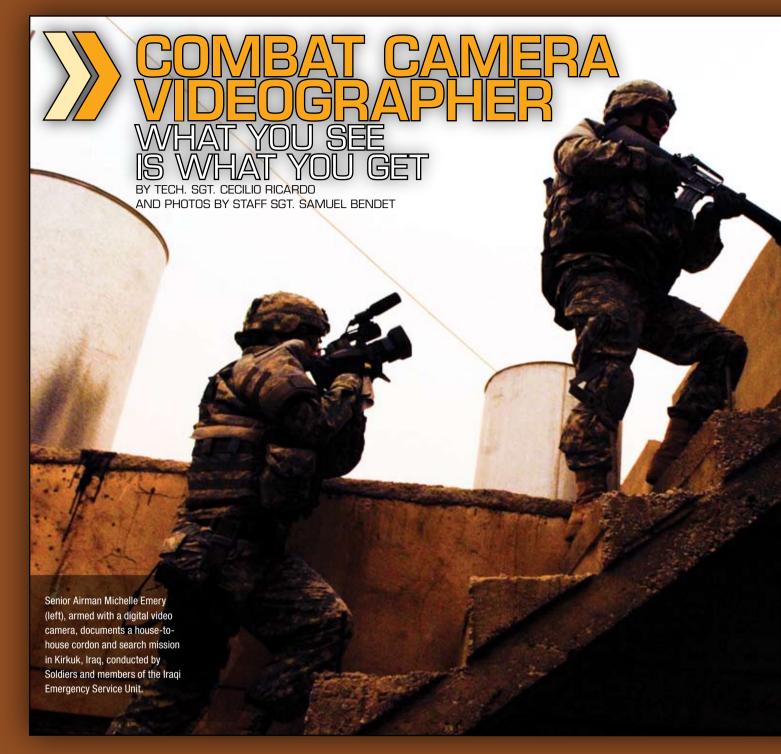
"We have to be agile enough to rapidly synchronize and integrate air mobility in a changing fight," the general said. "On any given day, 70 percent of all sorties flown in the air tasking order (in Southwest Asia) are air mobility sorties."

Airman Poteet doesn't worry

"WE MUST KNOW HOW TO SECURE A 25-TON MINE-RESISTANT AMBUSH PROTECTED VEHICLE SO IT DOESN'T **BUST LOSE AT 35,000 FEET** AND ENDANGER THE CREW **AND PASSENGERS**"

about the numbers. He's more concerned with moving passengers and cargo. Or with supporting air refueling, air drop, aeromedical evacuation and distinguished visitor flights, like he did while deployed to Afghanistan.

"I was most proud of my service while deployed to Afghanistan," Airman Poteete said. "We moved lots of sensitive weapons and special forces equipment covertly, and at night." 🤝



oaded down like a pack mule, Senior Airman Michelle Emery was ready for another early morning rendezvous with the Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division. Today the combat videographer would document them doing a cordon search.

She knew it would be a long day. Already the videotapes, two pounds of batteries, Kevlar helmet, body armor, 9 mm pistol and 40-pound rucksack she carried were getting heavy.

But it's her high-definition video camera, not her pistol, that is her most vital piece of equipment.

In this type of search, Soldiers cordon off an entire village and do a house-to-house search looking for weapons caches. It's a dangerous job. But the combat camera videographer's job is to provide a visual record.

So when Soldiers kick in a door, Airman Emery said, "I follow right behind them."

But on this mission, her team was going to the Zaytoun Chay River area, where coalition forces had not searched for insurgents or weapons in four years. It's a desolate and hard-to-reach place, so Black Hawk helicopters flew the team into the area. The mission is old hat for Soldiers.

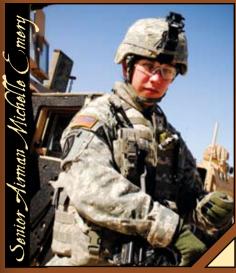
But it would be Airman Emery's first air assault mission.

"These missions are the meat and potatoes of our job," she said. "We want to go outside the wire."

The team walked for more than 10 miles and past four villages to reach their goal. After conducting a search, the Soldiers photographed each villager, recorded their thumb prints and put information about their irises in an iris recognition system. Airman Emery recorded it all on tape.

Before the march, some Soldiers bet the Airman wouldn't have the stamina or training to last the mission. They were





SENIOR AIRMAN MICHELLE EMERY A

DEPLOYED UNIT: 732nd Air Expeditionary Group, Balad Air Base, Iraq HOME UNIT AND BASE: 1st Combat Camera Squadron, Charleston Air Force Base, S.C. HOMETOWN:

Westdettford, N.J.

DEPLOYMENTS:

One

"THE TOUGHEST PART OF THIS JOB IS THE PHYSICAL **ASPECT, WE TRAIN** IN COMBAT CAMERA **BUT NOTHING PREPARES** YOU FOR A 19-HOUR **MARCH UP MUSCLE-TEARING HILLS."**

wrong. Instead, a few Soldiers vomited and fell out.

"The toughest part of this job is the physical aspect," the 24-year-old said. "We train in combat camera but nothing prepares you for a 19-hour march up muscle-tearing hills.

The Airman knows that working in combat camera means adapting to the environment and proving no job is too hard to accomplish. It's just what she did on the march to the village.

On the mission, the team walked a few kilometers each day, sweating in the afternoon heat, as they approached the village. Then the team would hunker down for the night, and each member would curl up in their sleeping bags to fend off the cold.

That night, while sleeping diagonally with only a rucksack tucked under her feet to keep her from slipping down a steep hill, Airman Emery knew she was truly a part of combat camera. And she knew her decision to re-enlist in the Air Force was the best choice she had ever made.

The long march and mission were a success. She proved she could do the job and managed to earn the respect of the Soldiers she worked with. Better still, she was now a war-tested combat camera videographer.

"I earned my (10th Mountain Division) patch that day," Airman Emery said.

Back at her deployed base — Balad Air Base, Iraq — she turned in her video tapes and put up her gear. Mission complete.

And although being deployed about 200 days in 18 months doesn't appeal to most, Airman Emery loves her job — dangers and all.

"My job is important because we're putting a face on the war without twisting it or expressing an opinion," she said. "Whatever we see is what goes on film. What you see is what you get." 🥪



C-17 LOADMASTER KEEPING WARFIGHTERS SUPPLIED

BY TECH SGT BEN GONZALES AND PHOTOS BY TECH SGT PATRICK HYDE



STAFF SGT. ADRIENNE GARIGLIO

DEPLOYED UNIT:

817th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, Incirlik Air Base, Turkey

HOME UNIT AND BASE:

10th Airlift Squadron, McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

HOMETOWN:

Fremont, Calif.

DEPLOYMENTS:

Two

"THE JOB CAN BE HARD SOMETIMES WHEN YOU RE-ALIZE PEOPLE ARE PUTTING THEIR LIVES ON THE LINE." n any given day, Staff Sgt. Adrienne Gariglio could load anything, from pallets of plastic spoons to a 100,000-pound tank, into her C-17 Globemaster III.

But people, especially those she helps fly in and out of the war zone, are her most important cargo, she said.

"I love to talk to the troops and make all the (passengers) comfortable," she said. "Whether it is Marines fresh from the war zone, or retired families flying space available, my job is to take care of the people in the back of the plane."

And there are the times when she helps transform her C-17 into an airborne ambulance to transport injured servicemembers out of the war zone and to medical facilities.

Sergeant Gariglio did a lot of flying in and out of the war zone during her 120-day deployment to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. The base is a busy hub for cargo planes delivering supplies to Afghanistan and Iraq. The sergeant knows the job she and her crew do is vital.

By delivering cargo directly into small and remote airfields throughout Iraq, Sergeant Gariglio and her aircrew help keep American warfighters safer. Each airlift reduces the number of people moving supplies by vehicle convoys over the country's dangerous roads. The roads are plagued by roadside bombs, the biggest killer of coalition forces.

"Delivering cargo through the air makes a big impact because we take people out of danger's way," she said. "By flying in cargo, people get it faster. Plus, the C-17 can land where other airlifters can't. Plus we can carry a lot more cargo."

The C-17 alone can carry nearly 171,000 pounds of cargo to austere airfields. Working in tandem with their turbo-prop cousin, the C-130 Hercules, the airlift aircraft sustain operations throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. During any 24-hour period, Air Force cargo planes average more than 140 airlift sorties, deliver more than 700 tons of supplies and transport approximately 3,500 passengers, U.S. Air Force Central officials said.

To keep pace with the demand, C-17 crews to fly an average of three to five missions a week throughout Southwest Asia. Sometimes they fly every day to deliver goods to warfighters when and where they need them. And the cargo aircraft also deliver cargo for allies.



And sometimes the cargo presents the "load" with a good challenge during loading.

"My most memorable mission was when my crew flew a Canadian Leopard (tank) into the war," Sergeant Gariglio said.

In October 2006, her C-17 crew — flying from Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan — delivered the 30-foot, 100,000-pound Canadian tank to Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan. The tank went into service with Canadian ground forces supporting NATO missions.

"It (the tank) was so big and heavy," she said. "We had never loaded one of them into our aircraft before. So we used a lot of restraints to secure the tank on board and



I had to make sure it didn't exceed our aircraft's limitations."

One of the reasons Sergeant Gariglio joined the Air Force was to see the world. She's gotten plenty of chances to do that. During her five years in the Air Force, she has visited 10 countries.

"The best place I've flown to was Antarctica during an Operation Deep Freeze mission," the sergeant said. "It was ironic because on that mission I helped Sir Edmund Hillary get up the stairs into our aircraft. He was the first person to climb Mount Everest (with Tenzing Norgay on May 29, 1953) — and I had to help him to get on our C-17."

But perhaps the most important missions Sergeant Gariglio flies are those where she and her crew must airlift patients out of the war zone. She has had to help configure her aircraft many times for aerial evacuation missions. Once configured to carry patients, the aircraft can carry up to 36 patient litters, 54 ambulatory patients and the medical team needed to attend them directly to the nearest hospital, whether it's in Germany or the United States.

But it's transporting caskets draped with American flags, or warriors injured in combat, that really brings the war on terrorism into perspective for the 23 year old.

"It's a real eye opener when we bring wounded and dead servicemembers on board," she said. "The job can be hard sometimes when you realize people are putting their lives on the line."

Sergeant Gariglio and her crewmates remain vigilant during all their missions, especially those in and out of the war zone. The crew does what it must to deliver people and cargo in and out of the fight quickly and safely. It's how they help further the war effort.

"We all contribute our fair share to the war effort," Sergeant Gariglio said. "Everybody fights the war on terrorism in their own way." 🨾

BY STAFF SGT. MATTHEW BATES AND PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. BENNIE J. DAVIS III

THE AIR FORCE'S LAST ACE? TTOOK 55 YEARS TO CONFIRM

hen retired Lt. Gen. Charles Cleveland answered the phone, he thought nothing of it. It was probably just one of his buddies looking to chat or someone trying to sell him another magazine subscription.

But it turned out to be one of the most important calls of his life.

"That's how I found out the Air Force was officially recognizing me as an ace," General Cleveland said. "Right there on the phone."

That meant the Air Force had confirmed the former F-86 Sabre pilot had shot down five enemy aircraft during the Korean War. But while the notification of his new-found status was brief and unceremonious, General Cleveland's journey to reach that point was a very long one.

"55 years, to be exact," he said.

The story started in South Korea in 1952. Then-1st Lt. Cleveland flew with the 334th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Kimpo Air Base. He was a skilled pilot and within eight weeks of joining the squadron he had already scored four kills — each a Russian-made MiG-15 Fagot.

"Each of those dogfights is burned in my brain," the West Point graduate said. "I can remember every minute of those battles like it happened yesterday."

Then, on Sept. 21, 1952, Lieutenant Cleveland's flight once again found themselves in aerial combat with a group of North Korean MiGs. He flew behind one of the enemy jets and let loose with the Sabre's six nose-mounted .50-caliber machine guns. Some of his rounds hit the MiG and within seconds the enemy plane sprouted a trail of smoke and began to fall rapidly.

That was the last image General Cleveland ever had of the MiG.

"At that moment we were being attacked by two other MiGs," the general said. "So my wingman had to call a break so we wouldn't get all shot up ourselves."

His wingman, then-brevet Capt.Don Pascoe, insisted he claim a kill, but the general just didn't feel right about it.

"There were rules for claiming a kill," he said. "You either had to see a fire that wouldn't go out, a plane crash or the pilot eject. Since I hadn't seen any of

those happen, I just felt the right thing to do was claim a probable."

And there the story ended. Almost.

Years later, General Cleveland attended a meeting of the American Fighter Aces Association and met Mr. Overton.

When Mr. Overton heard the general's story about the probable kill, he decided to prove the general had indeed shot down the MiG.

Over the years, Mr. Overton spoke to dozens of people and searched thousands of records, including flight details released by the then Soviet Union soon after the war. He compared the Russian records to General Cleveland's accounts and found a description of a downed MiG that seemed to match the story.

He called General Cleveland and said he'd found his missing MiG.

"I had no idea what he was doing," General Cleveland said. "When we first met he told me he was going to prove I shot the MiG down, but I was like, 'Yeah, right.' But, by God, he really did go out and do it."

With this information, General Cleveland and Mr. Overton went before the Air Force Board for Military Corrections in person. After reviewing the proof and listening to testimony, the board agreed to change the record and credit General Cleveland with his fifth kill.

"To have this happen to me so late in my life is extraordinary, even almost surreal," he said. "The recognition has been personally rewarding and professionally satisfying to me. And it's a real honor to be included with that great group of men who make up the rest of the aces."

The achievement is even more special because so many of his friends and colleagues were behind him making it a reality.

"Frankly, to have friends I admire and respect work so hard on my behalf means more to me than the actual recognition," the general said.

It's also an honor today's fighter pilots may never experience.

"I might just be the last fighter ace," he said. "Today's Air Force and Airmen are so technologically capable that the dogfight era has long since ceased. This means there may be no more fighter aces."

In his office, the phone rings again. As the general leans over to answer it, he smiles and picks up the receiver.

"I hope (Air Force) officials haven't changed their minds," he says.



Then-1st Lt. Charles Cleveland (third from right) deployed to South Korea in March 1952, where he flew F-86 Sabres as a flight commander with the 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing at Kimpo Air Base. Fifty-five years later, the Air Force recognized the retired lieutenant general as a fighter ace for getting five MiG-15 Fagots kills and one probable.



A painting of the "Chris Craft," the F-86 Sabre retired Lt. Gen. Charles Cleveland flew in South Korea, hangs in his office. The general named the jet after his son, and it was the jet he used to shoot down five enemy aircraft.

Retired Lt. Gen. Charles
G. Cleveland stands
before a replica of the
Korean War F-86 Sabre,
"Chris Craft," in which
he shot down five
MiG-15 Fagot fighters.
The jet is part of the
Air Park at Maxwell Air
Force Base, Ala.



Retired Lt. Gen. Charles G. Cleveland likes to share stories of his time as a fighter pilot during the Korean War. Fifty-five years after the war, newly discovered documentation by the Russian air force, and an eye-witness account from his former wingman, provided the evidence needed to support converting one of two probable kills from dogfights over "MiG Alley" into a confirmed kill.







Fronfling

To fight the war on terrorism, Senior Airman Bryan Gallagher makes sure aircraft have fuel to fly and fight — night and day.

On any given day in Iraq and Afghanistan, other faceless Airmen do their part to win the war.

Airman Gallagher, a fuels technician at a base in Southwest Asia — and thousands of others serving in the war zone — remain committed to ensuring the Air Force can sustain operations against the forces that seek to undermine security on both war fronts, and around the world.

These Airmen may not be kicking in the doors to insurgent strongholds or dropping bombs on al-Qaeda, but each has a valuable job to do.

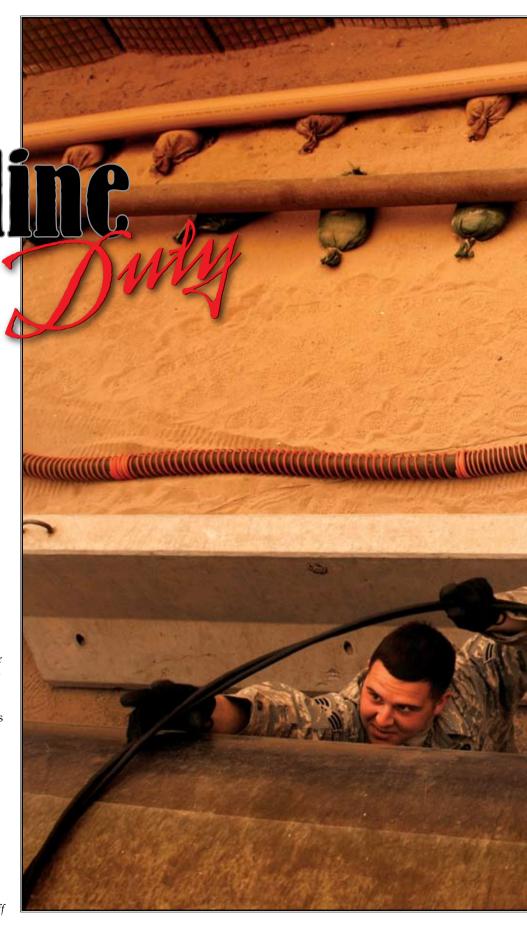
Nurse Capt. George Moctezuma cares for the wounded at the Air Force theater hospital at Balad Air Base, Iraq.

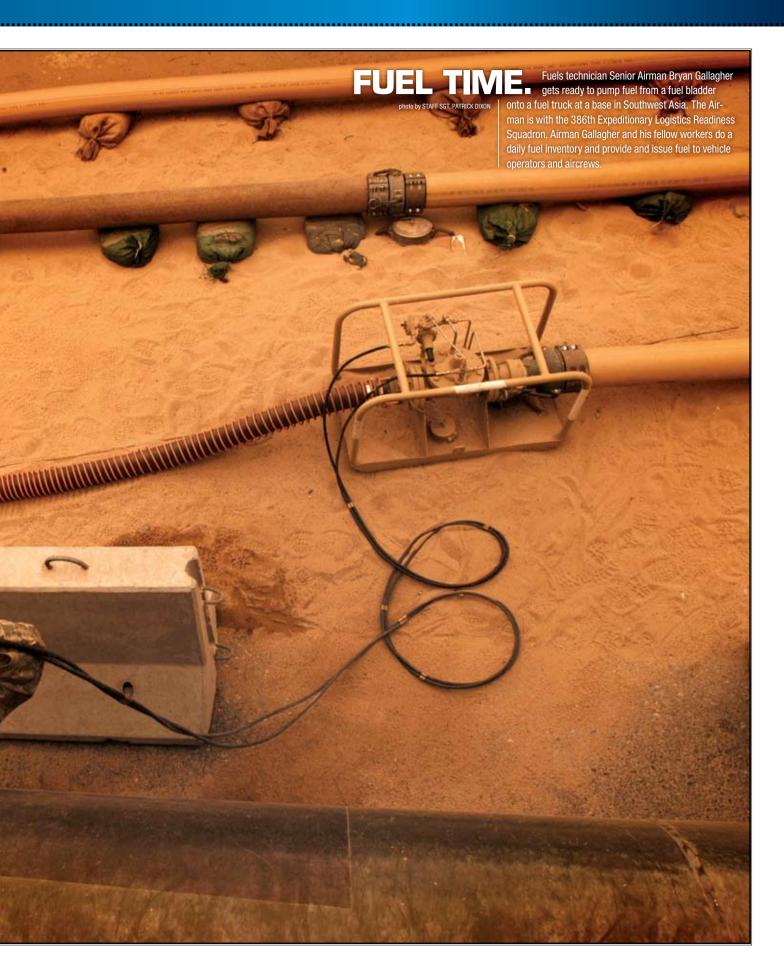
At another Southwest Asia base, crew chief Senior Airman Justin Brown maintains his C-130 Hercules ready to deliver critical cargo across the region.

And at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, explosive ordnance disposal Senior Airman Sarah Burrill searches for and destroys unexploded munitions.

Each job requires total dedication and sometimes unlimited sacrifice. That's the only way Airmen will ensure the Air Force maintains — above all — the capabilities it must have to dominate air, space and cyberspace.

Airman staff





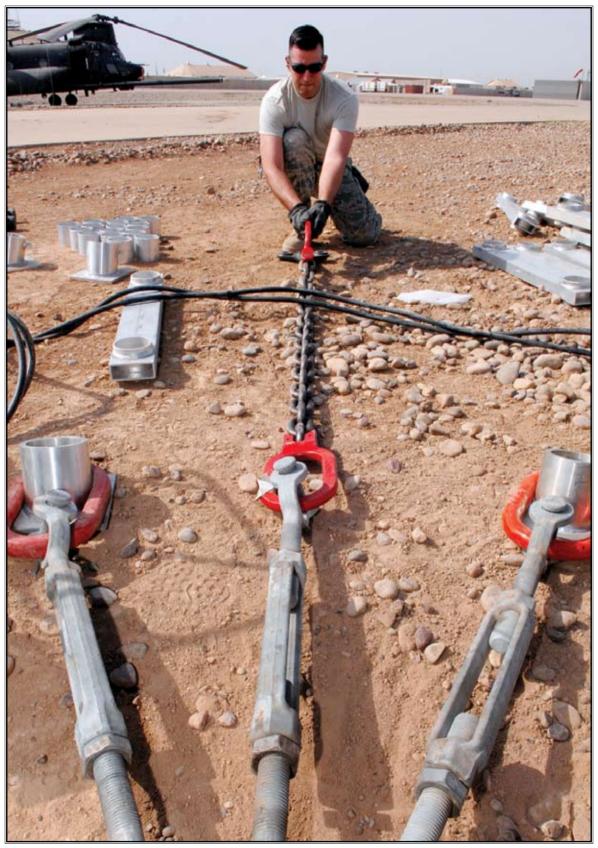




Operating room nurse Capt. George Moctezuma removes a sterile dressing from a patient after a surgical procedure at the Air Force Theater Hospital, Balad Air Base, Iraq. The captain deployed from Wilford Hall Medical photo by TECH. SGT. D. CLARE Center, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.



C-130 Hercules crew chief Senior Airman Justin Brown checks for the proper fit C-130 Hercules crew ciner Semior Annual Sustain Brown Street Serior before he connects a heavy tow bar to one of the four turbo-prop cargo planes at a base in Southwest Asia. The sergeant is with the 386th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintephoto by STAFF SGT. PATRICK DIXON nance Squadron.



Power production technician Tech. Sgt. Emmanuel Ramirez readies turn buckles and spacers before driving four-foot stakes in the ground to prevent an arresting barrier system from shifting during an emergency landing at Balad photo by SENIOR AIRMAN JULIANNE SHOWALTER Air Base, Iraq. The sergeant is with the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron.





Senior Airman Sarah Burrill cradles an unexploded ordnance as she carries it to a joint explosive ordnance rapid response vehicle at a village in the Kapisa Province of Afghanistan. The Airman is a member of a 755th Air Expeditionary Group explosive photo by TECH. SGT. JAMES LAW ordnance disposal team at Bagram Air Base.



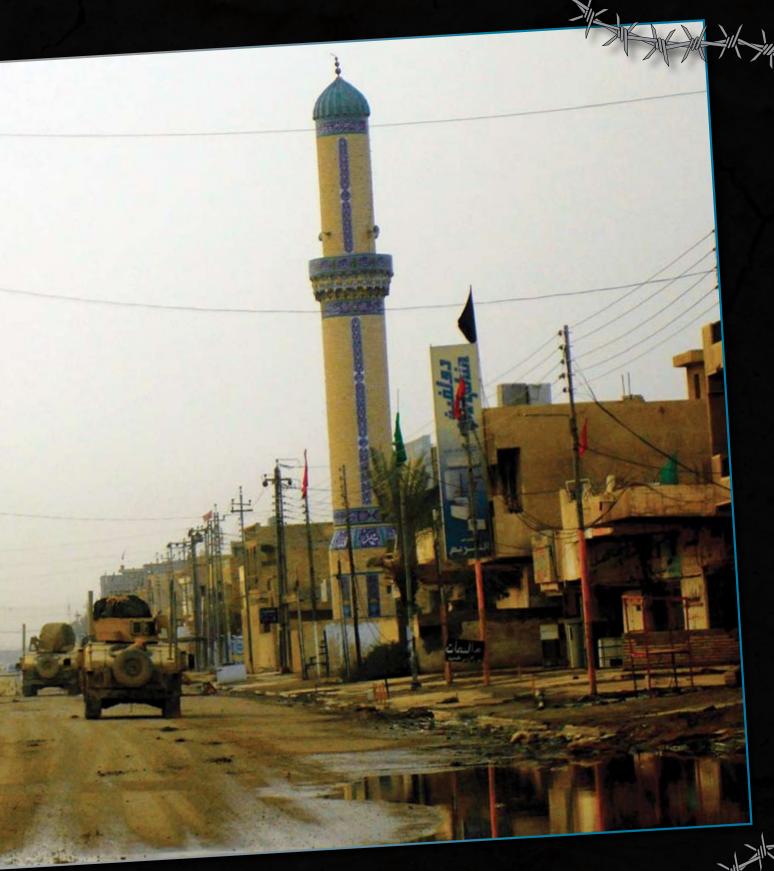
As hot gas and sparks fly onto his protective mask and leather clothing, machinist Staff Sgt. Jacob Schargus uses a gas-metal arc weld to repair a damaged air compressor at Balad Air Base, Iraq. The sergeant is with the 332nd Expephoto by SENIOR AIRMAN JULIANNE SHOWALTER ditionary Maintenance Squadron.



Crew chiefs jack up a C-17 Globemaster III before doing a final operations test on a nose landing gear strut they fixed at Balad Air Base, Iraq. Before releasing the transport back to duty, they performed landing procedures from the cockpit. The Airmen photo by SENIOR AIRMAN JULIANNE SHOWALTER are with Detachment 5, 721st Air Mobility Maintenance Group.

Air Force security forces Airman patrol the dangerous streets of Baghdad's Rasheed District in their armored Humvees.

The Airman are deployed to Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, Sather Air Base, Iraq.



LIVING AND WORKING IN A DANGEROUS TOWN BY TECH. SGT. JOEL LANGTON PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. ANDY DUNAWAY



irmen in Iraq welcome all the help they can get as they fight to stabilize one of the most dangerous countries in the world.

Security forces Tech. Sgt. Traci Bauder knows that's especially true in Baghdad.

Pock-marked with bomb craters and bullet holes, its buildings scarred from years of warfare and rife with suicide bombers and roadside-bomb planting insurgents, the city oozes with danger.

That's why the sergeant from Harrah, Okla., does all she can to keep Airmen who venture outside U.S. military bases as safe as possible. Her weapon? Information.

"The intel pours in here like water through a fire hose. We sort out what pertains to us and what doesn't," said the sergeant deployed from Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.

She briefs each security forces patrol before it hits Baghdad's menacing streets. The sergeant passes on every bit of information available. She talks about recent weapon cache finds, sniper and weather reports and updates the status of talks with any local leaders.

"Our marching orders were very simple when we got here — do what we do, but bring all of our kids back," the Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron member said. The unit's more than 175 Airmen recruit Iraqi police, oversee the building of Iraqi police stations and manage the design and construction of an Iraqi police academy.

That's a lot to ask, considering the incredibly dangerous mission coalition forces do on the city's streets each day. Before her unit arrived, the one that was doing the job lost one member and sent nine others home with wounds from enemy fire.

Senior Airman Jose Martinez is glad to get all the information he

He's a driver and turret gunner on a police transition team who is on a one-year tour with the detachment. One of his jobs is to help train Iraqi policemen. Unfortunately, his "office" is in Baghdad's Rasheed District, where each pothole can hide an improvised explosive device and any civilian could be a suicide bomber.

One day, while riding in his turret, Airman Martinez spotted a roadside bomb.

"We were driving and I saw a pile of wood with wires coming out of it. We stopped the squad — away from the IED," said Airman Martinez, deployed from Minot Air Force Base, N.D. "The explosive ordnance detachment came out and detonated the device."

His unit credited the Airman with saving his squad. Safety is paramount in Baghdad.

The detachment's Airmen have a difficult job — like all their coalition partners in Iraq. But little by little, Airmen like these are helping stabilize one of the world's most dangerous countries, one city street at a time. 🦋



Tech. Sgt. Traci Bauder provides the morning intelligence brief to a security forces team before it departs for a patrol in southwest Baghdad. The sergeant is with Detachment 3, 732nd Security Forces Squadron, Sather Air Base. She deployed to Baghdad from the 377th Security Forces Squadron, Kirtland Air Force



Tech Sgt. Terry Miller (left) and Master Sgt. William Schaal stand atop a new Iraqi police station in the southwest area of Baghdad. Both sergeants are with Detachment 3, 732nd Security Forces Squadron at Sather. Sergeant Miller deployed from the 90th Security Forces Squadron, F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. Sergeant Schaal deployed from the 341st SFS, Malmstrom AFB, Mont.

Air Force security forces perform a dry run of a roll-over drill before continuing their patrol into the southwest area of Baghdad. The Airman are with Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron at Sather.





Security forces Senior Airman Garrett Waller checks his equipment before going on a patrol into Baghdad's dangerous Rasheed District. The Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron Airman deployed from Malmstrom's 341st Security Forces Squadron.

Senior Airman Scott Highland reads a book during a quick break before patrolling Baghdad's hazardous Rasheed District. The sergeant is with Sather's Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron and deployed from the 6th Security Forces Squadron, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.





Iraqi civilians walk along a street in Baghdad's Rasheed District. American Airmen help Iraqi police patrol the streets of the city.

Senior Airman Juwan Young photographs an Iraqi police officer's retina to enter into a data base that identifies each officer. Airman Young is with Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron and deployed from the 2nd Security Forces Squadron Barksdale Air Force Base, La.



Airman



HENIATUR DITIDAR/NEISE

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Airman 1st Class Alex Jaime wrestles an electrical cable into place on a transformer on Wake Island. He was part of a team sent to the Pacific Island from Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, to assess typhoon damage.

